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Ministry of Education
Ministry of Children and Family Development

PROVINCE EXPANDS FASD AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

VICTORIA – The Province is including B.C. school districts in an expanded campaign to increase awareness about fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), Education Minister Shirley Bond and Minister of State for Child Care Linda Reid announced today.

FASD prevention signage and information pamphlets with the message "Alcohol and Pregnancy Don't Mix" will be delivered to school districts this month for use in public schools, continuing education programs, and band-operated schools offering grades 8-12. The local superintendents and district parent advisory councils will decide the appropriate use of the signage for their schools.

"Awareness and prevention are key components of British Columbia's approach to FASD," said Bond. "Our hope is that educating secondary school students about the dangers of alcohol consumption during pregnancy will motivate them and others in the school community to make healthy choices in the future."

FASD is the most common preventable birth disorder in the western world and causes lifelong brain damage. Health Canada estimates nine births per 1,000 are affected in some way by prenatal alcohol exposure.

"Partnering with the Ministry of Education on getting these materials into secondary schools is about giving children their best start in life," said Reid. "The young people we educate today will enter adulthood armed with the information they need to provide their own children with a healthy start."

The FASD prevention materials are already posted in government liquor stores, and made available to private liquor stores, bars, pubs, clubs and licensed restaurants. The signage was developed by the Liquor Control Branch, in collaboration with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Ministry of Health, the Centre for Addictions Research of BC, the B.C. Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, and the BC Centre for Social Responsibility.

In September 2003, B.C. was first Canadian province to create a comprehensive provincial strategy on FASD. Since that time, the Province has made strategic investments in areas of public awareness, early identification and support for women at risk, support for families, research, training and leadership.

For more information on FASD, including information on prevention, assessment and diagnosis, and family support, visit: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/fasd

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